



Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater's
DOLLARS & SENSE

Florida Department of Financial Services

Dear Fellow Floridians:

I want to share with you an op-ed I submitted to the Miami Herald this week on an issue that's very important to me.

De-Coding Florida's Finances

As Florida's Chief Financial Officer, I see a lot of data and numbers that have a big impact on our state's finances and its future. A central focus of my tenure as CFO has been to make that information available to taxpayers by establishing the [Transparency Florida](#) website, where Floridians can access details about state spending.

But transparency doesn't just mean making raw data available—it also means providing the information in a way that is understandable to taxpayers. That is why, this Saturday, I am issuing a challenge to the Florida teams of *Code for America*, a volunteer group that partners with governments to help make public information available in an accessible way.



As part of the "National Day for Civic Hacking"—an event that encourages computer programmers to get involved in their communities by developing user-friendly web applications—I am challenging *Code for Miami* and their counterparts in other Florida cities to make our data even easier to understand. I have challenged them to repackage our vendor payment data from raw spreadsheets to an intuitive web application that makes it easier to understand how the state spends taxpayer dollars.



This is the first state-wide challenge in Florida, and I am thrilled to encourage Floridians to get more involved in our government.

Florida is chock-full of innovators and tech-focused entrepreneurs. Our state is booming with creative, everyday people who are interested in technology and who want to use their skills to help others. *Code for America* harnesses the talents of these individuals and connects them with governments to donate their time for the betterment of their communities.

As a result, many bright and talented individuals will be spending their Saturday creating a web application that will help *all* Floridians have better,

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simpler, easier access to our existing information about government spending. This sort of transparency—where data is not only available but also easy to understand and access—is essential because it allows taxpayers to hold our government accountable for how it spends money.

This, to me, is a great example of the Florida story. Here, we have talent. Here, we have innovation. Here, we have people who demand transparency from their government. And, here in Florida, we have people who, when asked to help make our communities better, stand up and say, "Challenge accepted."

Sincerely,



Jeff Atwater
Chief Financial Officer
State of Florida

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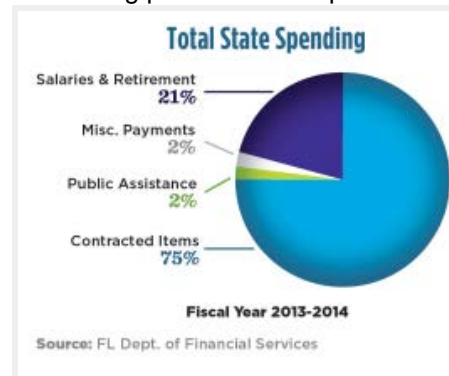
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Sunshine in State Contracting

Making government transparent is not an option, it is an obligation. Government must be transparent and offer convincing proof that it is up to the task. It's your money, and



you have a right to know how

every penny of it is spent. In the past, this would have required sifting through mountains of paper, but technology has revolutionized government accountability by enabling the public to have unprecedented and easy access to government spending.

Florida has taken advantage of this opportunity by publishing state spending data and contracts online through the Florida Accountability Contract Tracking System (FACTS). [Read more about FACTS and Florida transparency.](#)



Florida's Bottom Line is CFO Atwater's quarterly economic magazine, providing insightful analysis on Florida's financial health and economic innovation.

Florida Economic Briefs

U.S. gross domestic product declined in first quarter

U.S. Real GDP decreased by 0.7 percent in the first quarter of 2015. Real gross domestic product is the value of the production of goods in services in the United States, adjusted for price changes. The figures for Florida's gross domestic product will be released on June 10.

Source: **Bureau of Economic Analysis**

Florida's new home construction rises

Florida's new home construction permits rose 14 percent over the year in April—3 percentage points higher than the national increase of 11 percent. The increase in new home construction permits is a leading indicator for a growing housing market.

Source: **U.S. Census**
